Vol. IX. Numb. 1

THE OBSERVATOR.

A Letter, with an Account of ſeditious Words ſpoke by a Clergy-man in a Coffee-houſe near Ratcliff-Croſs, *and by others near* White-Chappel. *Another with an Account of a ſeditious Sermon on* Chriſtmas-*day at St.* Saviours Southwark. *The People of that Pariſh not ſo ill-principl'd as their Prieſts. Their Bell-man more loyal than their Parſons. The Faction Enemies to good Morals, as well as Liberty. The Neceſſity of enquiring into ſelect Veſtries. Paſſive-Obedience unanſwerably prov'd not to have been the Doctrine of the Church of* England *in Queen* Elizabeth's *Time, nor ſince the Revolution.*

From Saturday, January 14. to Wednesday, January 18. 1709.

Country-m. WE have frequently taken Notice, Maſter, of the Inſolence of the Faction, with Relation to *Dr. Sacheverell.* Here's a Letter to you with a very pregnant Inſtance of it. A certain Parſon, whoſe Name is *C——on*, did on the 31ſt of *December* laſt, and on the 7th Inſtant, ſpeak to this Effect on that Subject in a Coffee-houſe near *Ratcliff-Croſs:* 'The Houſe of Commons 'have got *Sacheverell* into Cuſtody, but what will 'they do with him? They wiſh now they had ne-'ver meddl'd with him. He is a brave Man, and 'I know he will come to no Hurt. The Houſe 'may ſay what they will of his Sermon, but Truth 'will be Truth as long as the World ſtands. They 'may keep him in Cuſtody during the Seſſion, and 'when that's over he will be releas'd. Were I worth 'ſo much, I would freely give 1000 *l.* to be in his 'Caſe; for he will certainly have a Biſhoprick, or 'ſome eminent Dignity in the Church, ere long, '*or the Queen will not ſit on the Throne ſeven Years* 'longer. And being check'd for ſaying ſo by ſome of the Company, he went off all on a Sudden, and bid the Woman of the Houſe ſcore him up a Penny.

Obſ. We have too many ſuch, *Roger*, who are entruſted with the Direction of Peoples Conſciences. We have heard of ſome of the ſame Temper about *White-Chappel*, and may eaſily ſee their Deſign is to lead the Nation to a Popiſh Prince and a *French* Government. The People who heard thoſe Words are much to blame, *Roger*, that they did not make Affidavit of them before a Juſtice of Peace, in order to have had the Parſon taken up; for ſuch Wolves in Sheeps Clothing do abundance of Miſchief. This is ſtill a farther Proof of the Neceſſity of Viſitations among our Clergy, in order to purge out ſuch as are diſaffected, eſpecially now that they are come to ſuch a Height of Inſolence, as to fly in the Face of Queen and Parliament, for the Sake of a Pulpit-Incendiary juſtly impeach'd of high Crimes and Miſdemeanors.

Country-m. Here's another Letter, Maſter, with an Account, that one of the Preachers on the other Side the Bridge took Occaſion in his Sermon to applaud *Dr. Sacheverell*'s, to bewail the deplorable Condition of the Church, which he ſaid is now ſo much in Danger by falſe Brethren, that a Preacher is not at Liberty to hold faſt the Form of ſound Words; but as he was going on at this Rate, the Church grew ſo dark that he could not read out his Compoſure; which ſome of *Dr. Sacheverell*'s Admirers were very glad of, leſt this Hotſpur ſhould have brought the Doctor into farther Danger by his unſeaſonable Zeal. At the ſame Time the Letter informs us, Maſter, that whatever the ſelect Veſtries may be, the Majority of the People is not poyſon'd with ſuch pernicious Principles; nay, the very Bellman, honeſt *John Brayne*, in his *Chriſtmas*-Verſes to his Maſters and Miſtreſſes, ſhews, that he takes the People of St. *Saviours* to be of the ſame Mind with himſelf, and applauds the Proceedings of the Commons againſt *Dr. Sacheverell* in the following Lines,

Great Senators, may Heaven your Lives protect,
And your Propoſals have their wiſh'd Effect.
May you diſcover all the Nation's Foes,
Puniſh the Villain, and his Faults expoſe.
Thus may you proſper, Gentlemen, and be
From all Diviſions and Diſorders free.

Obſ. Why truly, *Roger*, his Lines are as good, and his Senſe much better, than thoſe of *Parker*, the high-flying *Ephemeris*-Maker, who trumpets up the Doctor's Praiſe thro' the Nation at ſuch a Rate. In the mean Time, this ſeems to point at the Neceſſity of our Legiſlature's enquiring into thoſe ſelect Veſtries, that they may not have it in their Power to impoſe Trumpeters of Sedition, inſtead of Preachers of the Goſpel, upon Pariſhes, and that they may not guzzle, or otherwiſe miſpend the Revenues of the Church, without being accountable to the Pariſh for it. The late Attempt made to have the Doctor choſen Lecturer of *Newington-Butts*, in Contempt of Parliament, while the Doctor is under their Cenſure, ſeems alſo to prove the Neceſſity of regulating thoſe Matters, that the Authority of our Legiſlature may not be thus vilify'd, nor the Peoples Minds diſtracted by the High-Church's teaching ſuch Doctrines, as tend to ſubvert the Government, and foment Diviſions among us, while moderate Church-men teach Loyalty to the Conſtitution, and Moderation towards thoſe that differ from them, according to the Laws of God and Man, and the Queen's repeated Injunctions. There's the more Reaſon for this, *Roger*, ſince it appears, that thoſe High-flyers are Enemies to good Morals, as well as to Liberty and Chriſtian Charity, as is plain by the Doctor's *Derby*-Sermon, and the Practice of ſome of their great Magiſtrates that we could name, who, inſtead of puniſhing notorious Offenders againſt the Laws of the Land, and the Laws of Nature, by Crimes not to be mention'd in Chriſtian Nations, commit and brow-beat the Accuſers for doing their Duty, and ſet the Criminals free, to the great Encouragement of Vice, and the Diſcouragement of thoſe who oppoſe themſelves with ſo much Chriſtian Courage, to the growing Vices of the Age, at the Expence of their Lives and Fortunes. If Things be ſuffer'd to run on thus, our moderate Clergy-men are not ſafe in their Pulpits or Houſes, nor our honeſt Juſtices of Peace on the Benches, and honeſt Conſtables and their Aſſiſtants cannot execute the Duty of their Office, without having their Lives endanger'd by Ruffians, who have already murder'd ſeveral of them. Theſe Things ſeem to call aloud for the Interpoſition of our Legiſlature, as the Commons did by their Addreſs in the Time of King *William*, in order to prevent the Judgments which Wickedneſs, committed with Impunity, muſt neceſſarily bring upon Nations, eſpecially at ſuch a Time as this, when the Stage corrupts more in a Day, than the Pulpits are able to reform in a Month. This is a very unſuitable Return to the Almighty for his Goodneſs in preventing the Judgments of Famine, War, and Peſtilence from raging among us, as they do among neighbouring People, who we cannot ſay are worſe in their Morals than we; therefore I hope our Legiſla-

ture

will take these Things into Consideration at a convenient Opportunity, especially since Divisions and Dearth of Corn, the usual Forerunners of War, Pestilence, and Famine, make such formidable Advances upon us.

Country-m. I want some farther Account from you, Master, about the Book call'd, *A Defence of Dr. Sacheverell*, lately handed about, which pretends to prove Passive-Obedience to have been the Doctrine of the Church of *England* from the Reformation to these Times.

Obj. I told you before, *Roger*, that 'twas the old History of Passive-Obedience new vamp'd, or rather curtail'd to serve the present Occasion; so that 'tis a Cheat upon the People more Ways then one. 'Twas hatch'd at *Lambeth* after the Revolution by Arch-bishop *Sancroft*, and his nonjurant Clergy, and publish'd then as an Apology for their Disloyalty, tho' it be nothing but a Rhapsody of ill-digested Collections, most of which are nothing to their Purpose, except it be the Opinions of particular Men, who in the Reign of *Charles* the IId, were some of the unhappy Tools that preach'd and wrote us into Popery and Slavery; but for what they say of our Articles, Injunctions, Canons, Homilies, and Liturgy, by which they would give Authority to their own Sentiments, they are nothing at all to their Purpose, but only against Rebellion in general, according to the Doctrine of all Protestant Churches. To convince you that they don't come up to the present Case, *Roger*, you need only to consider, that we have had no Case parallel to that of the Revolution since the Reformation, *viz.* one King depos'd for invading our Religion and Liberty, and another who took Arms in Conjunction with the People, set up in his Stead, upon an Instrument or Declaration of Right, to restore our Constitution. This all the World knows to be true; and therefore our reform'd Church never had any Occasion to give their Judgment in any such Case at Home, 'till that of King *James* the IId, when 'tis apparent, that by the Clergy's taking the Oaths to King *William* and Queen *Mary*, our Church declar'd for the Revolution, and against Passive-Obedience in the Sense of those Men; tho' it appears by the Practice of our High-flyers, that they took them in such a Manner, and with such Reserves, as have a greater Affinity with the Equivocation of Papists, than the Sincerity of Protestants, especially if we consider their taking the Oath to abjure the Pretender, and to be true to the Protestant Succession, as 'tis appointed by the 13th and 14th of *Will.* 3. Cap. 6. which is a direct Renunciation of the divine Right of an hereditary lineal Succession: But how *Dr. Sacheverell* can reconcile his 5th of *November* Sermon with those Acts, and his own Oath, let him and his Friends see to it.

Country-m. That makes it plain, Master, that the present Church of *England* has renounc'd Passive-Obedience in the Sense of the Faction, especially since they know that the Clause of 12 and 13 *Car.* 2. Cap. 3, 4. enjoining the Clergy and others to swear, that it was not lawful, upon any Pretence whatever, to take Arms against the King, *&c.* was made void by 1 *William* and *Mary*, Cap. 8. But you know the Faction look upon that as an Apostacy from the Principles of the Church; and by the Pamphlet now under Consideration, they would have it to be thought, that Passive-Obedience is still the Doctrine of the Church of *England*.

Obs. You see I have unanswerably prov'd, *Roger*, that the present Church of *England* has renounc'd it; and I will as fully prove to you, that it was not the Doctrine of the first Protestant Church of *England*, in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*; for tho' they had no Opportunity to declare their Mind on that Head in *England*, yet they approv'd a Case parallel to that of the late Revolution in *Scotland*, where Queen *Mary* was dethron'd for attempting to subvert their Liberty and Religion, and her Son King *James* was set up in her Stead.

Country-m. That's to the Purpose indeed, Master, if you can prove it.

Obs. I prove it unanswerably thus, *Roger*. Our Clergy in several Convocations during Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign, not only approv'd by Words the Assistance Queen *Elizabeth* gave against the Queen Regent of *Scotland*, but charg'd themselves with heavy Taxes to reimburse the Queen's Charge in doing so, as appears by the Preambles to their Subsidy-Acts in that Reign, particularly the 5th of *Eliz.* Cap. 24. for which they gave a Subsidy of 6 *s.* per *l.* for reducing *Scotland* to Unity and Concord, and for abating Hostility and Persecution against the Professors of God's holy Gospel and true Religion in *France*; so that here our Clergy in Convocation not only approve, but assist the *Scots* and *French*, who had taken Arms against their respective persecuting Sovereigns. But that which makes it more plain, *Roger*, is this, that both Lords and Commons approv'd of what the *Scots* had done, in dethroning *Mary* Queen of *Scots*, as appears by Sir *Simon D' Ews*'s Journal, and follicited her being put to Death, pag. 207, 219, 380, *&c.* where their Reasons may be seen; and every one knows the Bishops at that Time were the most zealous against the Queen of *Scots*.

Country-m. With what Face then, Master, can the Faction urge the Authority of the Church of *England* to defend their slavish Doctrine?

Obs. Let them see to that, *Reger*: They have all along had Recourse to a Refuge of Lies, but never more plainly than in this Case; so that I hope our Legislature will consider the Tendency of such Libels, as are publish'd to defend those Pulpit-Incendiaries who preach against our Constitution, and not suffer their own Authority to be run down, and the People to be impos'd upon, by such notorious Falshoods from the Pulpit and Press.

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